

# NSW Rural Fire Service Qualified Consultants Framework

**NOTE; This Practice Note replaces both Fast Fact 5/10 and Practice Note 1/10. As at 15 April 2013 these documents are obsolete.**

The aim of this Practice Note is to clarify the policy position of the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) in relation to the framework for recognition of a bush fire consultant.

Section 79BA of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* and the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008* allow councils/certifiers (depending on the process) to utilise persons recognised by the NSW RFS as a 'qualified consultant in bush fire risk assessment'.

In order for a consultant to be recognised by the NSW RFS and the Department of Planning and Infrastructure (DoPI), they must demonstrate a number of requirements as part of an accreditation scheme.

## Recognised Schemes

In order for an accreditation scheme to be recognised, the NSW RFS and DoPI must be satisfied that a number of minimum requirements

are satisfied.

The scheme must clearly demonstrate the process of documentation, analysis and peer review in order for practitioners to meet the scheme requirements. Schemes must set terms for practitioners to meet annually to maintain accreditation.

The scheme must have the capacity to manage practitioners who want to undertake Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) assessments, deemed-to-satisfy and alternative solutions. Schemes must have:

- Code of Practice
- Minimum insurance requirements
- Conditions of Accreditation
- Ensure advertising is accurate and truthful in every respect and is not misleading
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program that ensures currency of members which is reviewed throughout their accreditation period.

The scheme must also be operated by a creditable organisation that is able to demonstrate integrity, due-process and quality management and has a sound financial standing.

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## Qualified Consultants

In order for a consultant to be recognised, they must undergo a rigorous process of documentation analysis and peer review in order to meet the scheme requirements, and must meet set terms annually to maintain accreditation.

## Administrative Requirements

- Applicants must hold appropriate current membership with the scheme provider;
- Public liability insurance of a minimum of AUD \$10 million and professional indemnity insurance of a minimum of AUD \$2 million;
- Applicants demonstrate they meet specific competency requirements.
- Applicants must sit an interview with a Peer Review Panel in order to be assessed for accreditation;
- Abide and be bound by the parent bodies:
  - Code of Practice
  - Abide by accreditation conditions;
  - Comply with relevant Federal and State Acts and/or Regulations;
  - Comply with relevant Australian Standards;
  - Comply with the Building Code of Australia;
  - Ensure advertising is accurate and truthful in every respect and is not misleading;
- Exercise skill and judgment to the best of their ability;
- Support the principles of the accreditation program;
- Act in all ways to uphold the reputation of the parent body at all times;
- Accredited Practitioners must commit to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) throughout their accreditation period;
- An accredited Practitioner must accrue a minimum specified amount of CPD points annually within a current accreditation period. CPD covers a range of knowledge and skill based activities including:
  - Formal or informal training and Participating in regulatory committees examining issues relating to bush fire;
  - Writing and publishing articles relating to bush fire planning and design;
  - Writing and presenting a paper at conferences that relate to bush fire planning and design;
  - Attending conferences workshops or seminars relevant to bush fire planning and design.



## Technical Requirements

In addition to the Administrative Requirements listed above practitioners must:

- Meet specific requirements in relation to:
  - Identifying bush fire prone land; and
  - Assessing potential bush fire behaviour and impact; and
  - Make recommendation on actions to mitigate the impact of bushfire; and
  - Achieve sustainable and viable community safety outcomes; and
- Have demonstrated the ability to use existing deemed-to-satisfy solutions of *Australian Standard 3959 Construction of buildings in bushfire-prone areas* to meet the requirements of *Planning for Bushfire Protection*. This includes developments assessed as being subject to a bushfire attack category as referenced in the Australian Standard 3959.
- Demonstrate they meet specific competency requirements either;
  - Through the completion of a tertiary level bushfire qualification approved by the NSW RFS; or
  - Through an assessment of comparable skills, knowledge and experience utilising a process approved by the NSW RFS.

